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1962/10/18

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DATE: October 25, 1962
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

White House approved,
10/23/62

DATE: October 18, 1962

Time: 5:00 p. m.
White House
Part IV

SUBJECT: Miscellaneous

PARTICIPANTS: US
The President
The Secretary
Ambassador Thompson
Mr. Hillenbrand
Mr. AkalovskyUSSR
Foreign Minister Gromyko
Mr. Semenov
Ambassador Dobrynin
Mr. Sukhodrev

COPIES TO:

G-Mr. Johnson
S/Mr. Rostow
S/Mr. Amb. Thompson
EUR-Mr. Tyler
BTF-Mr. HillenbrandP-Mr. Manning
INR/D-Mr. Hilsman
ARA-Mr. Martin
IO-Mr. Cleveland
Ambassy Moscow-Amb. Kohler
Ambassy Paris-Amb. BohlenAmbassy Bonn-Amb. Dowling
Ambassy London-Amb. Bruce
USUN-Amb. Stevenson
White House-Mr. Bundy
DOD/OSD - Secretary McNamara
DOD/ISA - Mr. Nitze

After a discussion on Germany and Berlin, Cuba, and the cessation of nuclear tests, Mr. Gromyko said that he wished, with the President's permission, to make some observations on certain other points.

Continuing to read from his prepared text.

NR
not relevant

Mr. Gromyko stated that the Soviet Union continued to base its policy on the premise that differences in ideology were not a barrier to peaceful coexistence and peace. As Mr. Khrushchev had stated, Americans and the Soviet people were different from the standpoint of ideology: the US was capitalist, and the Soviet attitude toward capitalism was well-known. The USSR was socialist and it was building Communism. The question of who would win must not be resolved by force but by peaceful competition, and the Soviet Union had adhered to this principle ever since Lenin's days. The Soviet Union was against the use of arms in resolving ideological differences. Competition in the economic field and in the satisfaction of spiritual and material needs of the people was a domain where the question of which system would gain the upper hand must be resolved. He said that he wished to reaffirm these views on behalf of the Soviet Government.

Toward the very end of the conversation, after having touched upon the possibility of Mr. Khrushchev's visiting the United States, Mr. Gromyko said he wished to thank the President for this opportunity of discussing with him questions of interest to our two states, since those questions related to very important aspects of the foreign policies of the US and USSR respectively. The Soviet Government had always believed that it would be a historical achievement if the US and the USSR found common language on these questions.

SECRET - EYES ONLY
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The President

~~SECRET~~ - EYES ONLY

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(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(9)(5)

The President said he agreed with Mr. Gromyko's last point. As he had said in Vienna, the US was a large country, and the Soviet Union was also a large country. Both had many things to do at home. As to the outcome of the competition between the two systems, history would be the judge. The President emphasized that neither he nor Mr. Khrushchev must take actions leading to a confrontation of our two countries. He said that since he had assumed the office of President, the US had attempted to adjust US/USSR relations. Laos had been a success so far, but there had been no success with respect to Germany and West Berlin until now. What was inexplicable in the light of what he had thought to be Mr. Khrushchev's understanding of the United States was what now happened in Cuba since July. Since Laos, that particular situation had been the most serious one. Finally, the President asked Mr. Gromyko to convey to Mr. Khrushchev his appreciation of the opportunity Mr. Khrushchev had given Ambassador Kohler and other American visitors to meet with him and have discussions.

Mr. Gromyko concluded his conversation with the President asserting that the Soviet Union's policy had been and still was aimed at strengthening peace and eliminating international differences, first and foremost the differences existing between the US and the USSR; Soviet policy was aimed at living in peace and friendship with the United States. This applied to Cuba as well; after all it was not the USSR that had invented this problem. It also applied to the question of a German peace treaty and the normalization of the West Berlin situation on the basis of such a treaty, as well as to other questions on which there was no common language between the US and the USSR. He said he would of course convey the President's remarks to Mr. Khrushchev and that he was sure that Mr. Khrushchev would be happy to receive them.

The meeting ended at 7:20 p.m.

Eyes only

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